

Park and Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting
January 13, 2009
5:30 pm

Meeting Summary

Committee Members Present – R. DeGroote, M. Zuber, R. Epler, O. Smith, Chair – 4.

Others Present – S. Katzenmoyer, Secretary
V. Spencer, Council President
E. Schlegel, prospective member

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.

Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. DeGroote, seconded by Ms. Epler, to accept the November 18, 2008 minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Smith stated that he did appear on Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz's "In Your District" BCTV program.

Discussion

Ms. Spencer indicated that the 2009 budget contains unresolved issues. He noted that the City Administration has not yet responded to the necessary amendments. He encouraged the Recreation Department to continue operating as usual. He indicated that the loss of programs has not been discussed.

Mr. Zuber and Mr. DeGroote noted that meetings in reference to the Olivet organization assuming the functions of the Recreation Department have occurred but there are no plans to move forward.

Mr. Spencer recommended holding public hearings before any programs are discontinued or outsourced. Mr. Schlegel suggested sending flyers home with children through the school district to encourage attendance at any such public hearings. He noted the continuing problems with Reading High School and crime in Reading and stated his belief that Police and Recreation would not be the best places to make cuts. Ms. Epler suggested that the City work to list priorities.

Mr. Smith stated his hope that the PARC would move forward and react as necessary to any position the Administration may take. He suggested that planning begin based on the results of the park and playground tour. Mr. Zuber reminded the Committee that he has completed rehabilitations at 18 of 21 parks/playgrounds and that the final three will be

completed by the end of 2009. He stated that he can easily begin work on the 10 year park and open space plan.

Report from Recreation Director

Mr. Zuber reported:

- The rehabilitation of the final three parks/playgrounds are on schedule.
- All programs are running smoothly. Programs include fitness, cooking, art, chess, and writing club are available at 3rd & Spruce and 11th & Pike.
- Three basketball programs, tennis, flag football, and three volleyball leagues are also currently running.
- Kids' Café is available at three locations – 3rd & Spruce, 11th & Pike, and Pandora Park.

Ms. Epler requested a list of activities and the locations they are being held. Mr. Zuber noted that these programs are adequate but that more could be done with more facilities available.

Mr. Schlegel suggested generating income for the youth programs by charging a fee for adult programs. He suggested increasing the number of adult programs available. Mr. DeGroote stated that many adult leagues have stopped operations and leagues have moved to Body Zone.

Mr. Schlegel informed the PARC that he is a softball umpire. He noted that Reading does not have quality softball fields. He informed the members that he began a softball league in Florida that has grown to 52 teams. Mr. DeGroote noted that an entire generation has now grown up not playing baseball and that has brought the demise of Reading softball. Mr. Smith noted his hope to start working to bring softball back to Reading.

Mr. DeGroote noted the maintenance issues with ball fields.

Mr. Smith noted his hope that the school district would become involved in this issue as it would mean winning softball teams at the middle school and high school level. He noted his hope that district facilities could be used for the programs. There was discussion of the need to keep out of pocket expenses down to encourage participation by the youth of Reading.

Mr. DeGroote noted the need to keep recreation in Reading and suggested work on bringing back some former events such as the Lantern Parade. This would invoke nostalgia and may encourage more people to become involved in recreation. Mr. Zuber noted the constant competition recreation faces with other activities and video games.

Mr. Smith suggested compiling a list of past activities to be discussed at the next meeting. Hockey and athletic associations were also discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

The next meeting of the PARC will be held on Tuesday, February 10 at 5:30 pm at
Pondora Park Fieldhouse.

Respectfully submitted

*Shelly Katzenmoyer,
Deputy City Clerk*